

California Coastal Cleanup Day Prepares for 26th Annual Event With a Call to Reduce Waste

California Desk
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SAN FRANCISCO, June 24 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The California Coastal Commission is proud to announce the 26th annual California Coastal Cleanup Day, the state's largest volunteer event. The event will take place at more than 800 locations around the state on Saturday, September 25*, from 9 AM to Noon. The Cleanup is the State's largest single effort to remove the debris that has accumulated on our beaches and inland shorelines over the past year, bringing tens of thousands of volunteers out annually to protect the marine wildlife and habitat that can be badly damaged by marine debris.

To avoid conflicting with Yom Kippur, the Cleanup has been moved back a week from its traditional 3rd Saturday in September.

As Coastal Cleanup Day enters its second quarter century as California's most successful volunteer event, the Coastal Commission and its many partners around the state are seeking ways to improve upon the Cleanup by reducing the amount of debris created by the Cleanup itself. The first step in this effort is the launching of a BYO (Bring Your Own) campaign designed to encourage volunteers to help decrease the ecological footprint of the Cleanup. Volunteers are being encouraged to turn out to their favorite Cleanup location with their own bucket or reusable bag, gloves, and reusable water bottle, so that they won't have to use the disposable items that the Commission supplies. "Coastal Cleanup Day has been incredibly successful at removing trash from our beaches and waterways, but in order to achieve this success, the Coastal Commission has had to provide hundreds of thousands of single-use, disposable items for our volunteers to use," said Eben Schwartz, Statewide Director of Coastal Cleanup Day. "It's time for the Cleanup to make every effort to become a zero waste event."

The Commission's efforts to reduce the amount of trash created by the Cleanup become even more important in light of the incredible growth the Cleanup has enjoyed over the past 3 years. Over 80,000 volunteers participated in the 2009 Cleanup, an all-time record for participation and a 60 percent increase in volunteers since the 2007 event. Those volunteers removed more than 1.3 million pounds of debris from California's shorelines. Plastic debris makes up close to 80 percent, by item, of the debris removed, and single-use disposable plastic goods account for almost all of that 80 percent. 2010 promises to topple records once again, as the Commission has teamed with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) to expand the Cleanup along rivers and throughout the watersheds of the Sierra Nevada region.

"In our inaugural event last year, the Great Sierra River Cleanup marshaled 3,500 volunteers to remove 130 tons of trash from Sierra rivers and streams, and we have expanded quite a bit this year" said SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham. "The Coastal Commission has done a great job of establishing the Cleanup in most areas of California; the Sierra Nevada Conservancy can bring a more regional focus and increased participation to the event in our area. By connecting the Cleanup from source to sea, we can help every Californian recognize that our state's vital waterways link all of us together. Sixty-five percent of California's water comes from the Sierra, so we are excited about the impact this event is having statewide."

For those who don't want to wait until September to start cleaning California's beaches, the Coastal Commission also runs a year-round beach cleanup program called Adopt-A-Beach. When a group adopts a beach they commit to cleaning it three times per year (school groups are required to clean up only once per year). The program has been a success since its inception in 1984, but always needs helping hands. Schools, youth groups, community groups, churches, businesses and individuals contribute to this year-round effort.

For more information on last year's Cleanup or any of the new initiatives planned for 2010, please visit www.coastforyou.org. For a PDF of this year's artwork and ad campaign, please visit the "Media

Center" section of www.coastforyou.org.

The statewide event is presented by the California Coastal Commission with major statewide support from Crystal Geyser, Oracle and Whole Foods Market. Additional support comes from Waste Management and Nature's Path. Other sponsors include Natracare, KPMG, and Fairmont Hotels and Resorts. Northern California media sponsors include KFOG Radio and KPIX/CW Bay Area TV. Northern California media support also comes from the San Francisco Department of the Environment, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and Marin County Board of Supervisors.

Southern California media sponsors include KCAL-TV and KCBS-TV.

California Coastal Cleanup Day 2010 is supported by the California Coastal Commission, California State Parks Foundation, and the Ocean Conservancy. This event is made possible by the hard work of hundreds of local non-profits and government agencies throughout the state and tens of thousands of volunteers annually.